

Non-Technical Summary of the Environmental Statement A69 Haydon Bridge Bypass

Public Information
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1 Introduction

The Highways Agency is proposing to improve part of the A69 Trunk Road at Haydon Bridge with a single carriageway bypass on the south side of the village.

An Environmental Statement has been prepared for this scheme in which the effects on the environment are described in detail. This document explains the proposals and summarises the Environmental Statement in non-technical language. It describes why the proposed scheme is necessary, the potential effects on the environment and the measures to be taken to minimise these effects.

1.1 Why the Bypass is Necessary

The existing A69 Trunk Road passes through the centre of Haydon Bridge. The high numbers of cars and heavy goods vehicles passing through the community every day cause congestion, poor air quality and traffic noise, which are a nuisance and safety concern to local residents and pedestrians. These conditions will continue to deteriorate as traffic levels increase.

To alleviate these problems, the Highways Agency is proposing to construct a new 2.9km single carriageway bypass around the southern side of the village.



Traffic congestion in Haydon Bridge.

1.2 Route Options

The proposal to provide a bypass to Haydon Bridge was first investigated in the 1970's and again in 1984 where 5 routes were considered. Further studies in 1992 and 2001 confirmed the optimum route for a bypass was to the south of Haydon Bridge.

Additional engineering and environmental assessment work was carried out in 2002 where 3 routes and various standards of carriageway ranging from a single carriageway to a dual carriageway were assessed. A single carriageway was considered most appropriate as it had lower environmental impact, it was consistent with the route standard of the A69 between Hexham and Carlisle and it was the most cost effective solution.

Following completion of this assessment work a single route was subject to a public consultation in March 2003 where the proposals received strong support and this route was announced as the Preferred Route in December 2003.

1.3 Scheme Objectives

The main objectives of the scheme are:

- To improve safety for all road users in Haydon Bridge by removing through traffic and by providing a better standard of trunk road.
- To reduce congestion and delays along the A69.
- To ease the existing problems of community severance, noise and air pollution by improving the environment for residents, pedestrians and cyclists in Haydon Bridge .
- To provide an environmentally acceptable solution that minimizes the impact on the built and natural environment.



The bypass would improve safety in Haydon Bridge by removing through traffic.

1.4 What is Proposed

Figure 1 (overleaf) shows the location of the bypass scheme. The new route would start to the west of the existing A69/U8128 junction to West Rattenraw and would head in a south-easterly direction over the Newcastle to Carlisle railway line and the River South Tyne. A key feature of the proposal would be a new viaduct, designed to span across both the railway and the river.

Continuing in a south-easterly direction from the river, the route would cross farmland on embankment then pass over the U8049 minor road between East and West Land Ends where a new underpass would be provided to maintain access. The route would continue through farmland, to the south of East Land Ends Farm, and veer to the east heading towards Cemetery Road, where a new underpass would take the bypass over Cemetery Road.

From Cemetery Road, the route would head in a north-easterly direction and pass over the Langley Burn in Gee's Wood on a new bridge. North east of Gee's Wood, a new junction would be formed to maintain access onto the A686 Alston Road and into the village from the east end. Finally, the new route would rejoin the existing A69 near to Crossley Burn.

New junctions would be formed at both ends of the scheme to maintain access to Haydon Bridge.

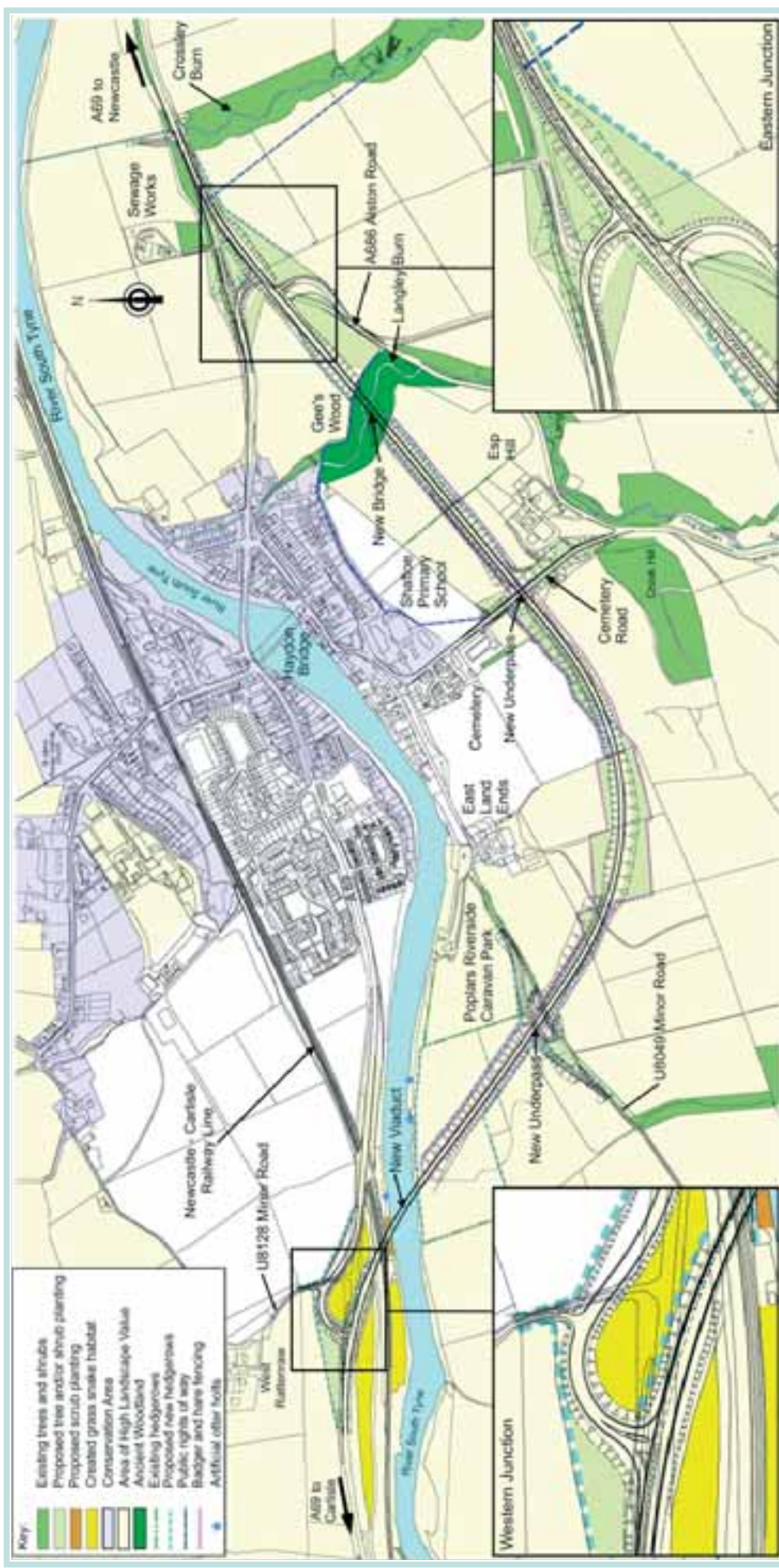


The point where the new bypass will cross the River South Tyne.

Figure 1

Plan of the proposed route.

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2 Environmental Effects

2.1 Air Quality

Five traffic pollutants have been studied as part of the assessment for their effect on air quality and none are predicted to be above the Government's health based objectives for local air quality. A comparison of predicted emission levels between the existing trunk road and new bypass has shown an overall improvement in air quality for 559 properties through the centre of Haydon Bridge and a slight deterioration in air quality for 7 properties.

The regional assessment on air quality is based on the total distance travelled by all traffic on the road network. The proposed scheme is slightly longer overall than the current distance travelled along the existing roads; hence resulting in a slight increase in emissions.

2.2 Cultural Heritage

The village of Haydon Bridge grew around the river crossing point and there has been a bridge at this location for at least 700 years. This bridge is a scheduled ancient monument and there are also a number of listed buildings, a conservation area, and to the north, Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site. Evidence of human activity in the area can be traced back to the Neolithic Age, the Bronze Age and the Roman occupation.



The historic bridge over the River South Tyne.

The scheme would have a positive impact on the cultural heritage of the village centre, and the setting of the scheduled ancient monument would benefit from the removal of large volumes of traffic.

The route would pass close to Esp Hill Farm, a grade II listed building. To minimise these effects, hedge and tree planting, in keeping with the landscape, would be provided along the line of the route near to the farm.

Historic field patterns would be affected along the route. To reduce the impact, some field boundaries would be re-aligned to replicate the existing regular field pattern.

Some archaeological sites are already known but there may be others that are unknown. Archaeological survey work is presently being arranged to identify and record any unknown buried remains. If any remains are found, important sites would be preserved where possible and a programme of excavation and recording of sites would be undertaken.

2.3 Disruption Due to Construction

The scheme would take about 2 years to construct and will be followed by landscape planting. Construction impacts may include an increase in noise, vibration, dust and dirt and the presence of heavy construction traffic, however control measures and good working practices would be put in place to ensure that disturbance to local people, the environment and road users are kept to a minimum. The scheme has been designed to minimise the need for imported material, reducing the number of journeys required by site traffic. It would still be necessary for trips to be made by construction traffic through the village as the material is taken from one part of the site to another.

At various times during construction, it would be necessary to close parts of the existing road network for safety reasons. Cemetery Road and East Land Ends Lane would both require temporary road closures during the course of construction. Temporary traffic control would also be required at both ends of the scheme where the new route would rejoin the existing A69 and measures would be taken at all these locations to minimise driver delay.

2.4 Ecology and Nature Conservation

Red squirrels are just one of the protected species in the area.



The existing ecology of the area does not include any nationally important sites on or near where the road is proposed although the Tyne and Allen river gravels candidate Special Area of Conservation is situated some 7.5km downstream. Extensive ecological surveys have been undertaken and have identified a number of species

that are protected by European and National laws including: otters, a number of species of bats, Atlantic salmon, brook and sea lamprey, red squirrels, grass snakes and badgers.

The key potential effects are:

- Severance of bat flight lines, loss of feeding habitat and the risk of road injuries and mortality;
- Disturbance to otter and loss of their holts along the River South Tyne;
- Potential disruption of salmon and lamprey spawning grounds;
- Disturbance and loss of lapwing wintering habitat;
- Loss of brown hare, red squirrel and grass snake habitat.

Extensive ecological mitigation is proposed to minimise these potential effects. Good construction site management practices would minimise disturbance of wildlife and habitats whilst specific mitigation measures would address impacts for particular species. These measures include:

- Extensive habitat creation including woodland, hedgerow, and species rich grassland;
- Fencing and underpasses to prevent wildlife suffering road injuries;
- Installation of bat boxes and restoring bat flight lines;
- Retention and replacement of trees where possible to minimise loss of habitat;
- Phased river works to protect fish during the migration and spawning season.

2.5 Landscape Character

The bypass has been designed to reduce, as far as possible, any damage to the environment, whilst still considering other factors such as road safety, engineering design and cost. Measures have been taken to integrate the bypass into the local landscape by the appropriate use of cuttings and embankments. The route lies to the south of Haydon Bridge and for the most part, to the south of the River South Tyne. It has no effect on the designated Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site or North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Geopark.

The bypass would create some new features with newly engineered slopes becoming visible on the gently undulating hillside, and four new bridges impacting on the area's landscape. A widened transport corridor would become more visible, would fragment Gee's Wood and affect other groups of trees, leading to a loss of tranquillity.

The key beneficial effects on the area would include improvements to the townscape of Haydon Bridge and the village's conservation area, with a reduction in air pollution and vibration to historic buildings. The mosaic of woodland and farmland, a characteristic of this area, would be strengthened by positive mitigation measures that would include landscape mounding, extensive tree and shrub planting and new native species hedgerow planting. In total, about 4.5 hectares of additional woodland planting would be provided.

2.6 Visual Impacts

The areas of greatest visual change would be those from elevated valley sides where some open views would change to be replaced with views of the bypass with planted mitigation measures. New bridges across natural landscape will introduce substantial new features into an attractive area presently unaffected by A69 Traffic.

The present adverse visual impacts of heavy traffic within the village will lessen substantially as traffic flows transfer to the bypass. In the opening year, 301 properties would experience an adverse visual impact, whilst 181 properties would experience a benefit. As the scheme planting matures, the visual impact of the scheme would be reduced, so that only 99 properties would experience an adverse visual impact.

2.7 Land Use

The scheme would take about 18 hectares of agricultural land and would affect 5 agricultural holdings with a major impact on 1 agricultural unit and a minor impact on 4 units. Movements of agricultural vehicles and livestock would be maintained by the provision of access tracks and by maintaining access through East lands End Underpass, Haydon Bridge Viaduct and Cemetery Road underpass.

The scheme would not directly affect development land or common land. The proposed doorstep green (public open space) would be slightly affected. There would be no demolition of property.

2.8 Traffic Noise and Vibration

The noise and vibration caused by traffic on a road can affect those living nearby and those using noise-sensitive buildings/sites such as schools and recreation areas. Noise levels would improve for many village residents as the bypass is relocated away from Haydon Bridge, from the provision of landscape mounding and the construction of the bypass in cutting. Approximately 54 properties would experience an increase in traffic noise, 401 properties would experience a decrease in traffic noise and no properties would qualify for noise insulation or payments

Without the bypass, traffic noise levels would gradually increase over time as traffic flows rise over the next few years.

2.9 Pedestrians, Cyclists, Equestrians and Community Effects



*Footbridge and path
at the north end of
Gee's Wood*

There are two public footpaths and two permissive paths affected by the proposals. The most frequently used public footpath is that through Gee's Wood, this would be permanently diverted under the new bridge. The permissive paths, which are frequently used by anglers, run along each bank of the River South Tyne, near the western end of the scheme and would pass under the proposed river and rail viaduct.

Footpaths may need to be closed at various times during construction affecting those who use the routes. Measures to reduce the effect on local users would be put in place, including minimising the time during which the footpaths are closed and providing clear signposting of alternative routes.

The bypass would significantly reduce the volume of traffic passing through Haydon Bridge, providing easier access to shops and services making it a more attractive place to visit.

2.10 Vehicle Travellers

It is anticipated that the scheme would have an adverse effect on views for vehicular travellers, when compared to those currently experienced along the line of the existing A69. The scheme takes drivers away from the village centre, eliminating driver views of the historic townscape. The engineering requirements of the new route would place much of the bypass below existing ground levels, providing frequent views of roadside planting and the occasional new view across the countryside.

The bypass would reduce levels of driver stress on both the new bypass and the existing A69. A combination of pedestrians, parked cars, HGVs and frequent minor road accesses add to the risk of accidents occurring on the existing trunk road and demand more driver attention. The new route would provide an improved road layout for trunk road traffic, better visibility for drivers and would provide a much safer environment for pedestrians.



View of proposed bypass looking east.

2.11 Water Quality and Drainage

View of Langley Burn and Gee's Wood



There are a number of surface water features along the length of the proposed scheme. At the western end of the scheme, the route would cross the River South Tyne. Towards the eastern end of the scheme, the route would cross Langley Burn, which is a tributary of the River South Tyne. Surface water run-off from the bypass

would be directed to new outfalls into the local watercourses.

Potential impacts on the watercourses are greater during the construction phase with a potential effect on river flows and an increased risk of river pollution. In order to mitigate any potential risks, measures would be undertaken to safeguard the water quality, riverbanks, flooding and any impact on fishing.

The River South Tyne is an important river for fishing. Work affecting the riverbed would be restricted to time outside the salmon migration and spawning season. Fishing would not be allowed adjacent to the proposed river crossing during the construction period.

View looking west of the River South Tyne at the approximate crossing location of the route.



2.12 Geology and Soils

The geology of the area is formed by sedimentary rocks generally overlain by glacial clay, with areas of sand and gravel, and alluvium associated with the River South Tyne. An area of sandstone outcrop is visible in Gees Wood, in the banks of Langley Burn. Gee's Wood is a site of local wildlife and nature conservation, administered by the Northumbria Wildlife Trust.

The proposed route is away from past underground mine workings and is unlikely to affect any future coal mining. A potential sand and gravel resource that could be affected is present by the river at the western end of the scheme and extends to the south of East Land Ends Farm.

Most soil and rock excavated during the construction would be re-used to build the new route.

The route would not affect any geological Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or any Regionally Important Geological Site (RIGS), and would not significantly impact upon the geology and soils of the area.

2.13 Impact of the Scheme on Policies and Plans

Relevant policies and plans at national, regional, county and local (district) level have been assessed to establish whether they were supported or hindered by the scheme. Of the policies that were highlighted as being possibly affected, 21 were seen as being hindered, 50 as supported, and the remaining 83 policies were assessed having no impact. Policies relating to the natural environment are more likely to be hindered and policies relating to economic development and highway design are more likely to be supported.

3 Statutory Procedures

The proposals for the scheme are contained in the following draft scheme and Orders published under the Highways Act 1980:

- The A69 Carlisle to Newcastle Trunk Road (Haydon Bridge Bypass) Line Order 200*
- The A69 Carlisle to Newcastle Trunk Road (Haydon Bridge Bypass) Detrunking Order 200*
- The A69 Carlisle to Newcastle Trunk Road (Haydon Bridge Bypass) Side Roads Order 200*
- The A69 Carlisle to Newcastle Trunk Road (Haydon Bridge Bypass) Compulsory Purchase Order (Highways Act 1980, Acquisition of Land Act, 1981).

4 What Happens Next?

A Public Exhibition illustrating the proposals will be held at Haydon Bridge Community Centre at the following times:

- **Thursday 30th June – 6.00pm to 9.00pm**
- **Friday 1st July – 10.00 am to 8.00pm**
- **Saturday 2nd July – 10.am to 2.00pm**

At the exhibitions, staff from the Highways Agency, the Agency's contractor and designers, will be available to answer your questions.

The publication of the draft Orders allows you to examine the proposals and to offer comments in the form of support, objection or other representations. The end of the period to comment, (known as the objection period), will be on the 6th September 2005.

If at the end of this period there remain unresolved objections to the scheme, then a Public Inquiry into the draft Orders may be held before an independent Inspector appointed by the Lord Chancellor. If a Public Inquiry is held then everyone who has supported, objected to, or made other representations about the draft Orders will be notified of the date and the venue beforehand and will have the opportunity to speak to the Inspector. Notices will also appear in the local press.

5 Deposit Sites

Copies of the draft Orders, scheme plans and the accompanying Environmental Statement may be inspected free of charge at the deposit points given below during normal office hours unless otherwise stated, or can be purchased from the Manchester office of the Highways Agency at the address below:

The Highways Agency

Major Projects Directorate,
Room 710, City Tower,
Piccadilly Plaza,
Manchester, M1 4BE.
Telephone: 0161 930 5535

Haydon Bridge Library

Church Street, Haydon Bridge,
Hexham,
Northumberland, NE47 6JQ.
Telephone: 01434 688857

Opening Times

- Tuesday 10am to 5 pm
- Thursday 1pm to 7.30 pm

Northumberland County Council

Main Reception,
County Hall,
Morpeth,
Northumberland, NE61 2EF.
Telephone: 01670 533015

Tynedale Council

Main Reception,
Hadrian House, Market Street,
Hexham,
Northumberland, NE46 3NH.
Telephone: 01434 652200

Extra copies of this Non-Technical Summary can be obtained free of charge from the Manchester office of the Highways Agency at the address above, or can be viewed on the Highway Agencies website at:

www.highways.gov.uk

6 Your Comments

Letters of support for, or objections to, the draft scheme and Orders and the Environmental Statement and other representations, should be sent to the above address, to arrive no later than Tuesday 6th September 2005.

For real time traffic information:

08700 660 115

www.highways.gov.uk/trafficinfo

24 hours a day, 365 days a year

(Calls from BT landlines to 0870 numbers will cost no more than 8p per minute; mobile calls usually cost more)

For general Highways Agency information:

08457 50 40 30

email: ha_info@highways.gsi.gov.uk

8am – 8pm weekdays, 9am – 5pm weekends

(Calls from BT landlines to 0845 numbers will cost no more than 4p per minute; mobile calls usually cost more)

Driving through roadworks

If you do have to drive through roadworks, please take extra care.



- Keep to the speed limit - it is there for your safety
- Get into the correct lane in good time - don't keep switching
- Concentrate on the road ahead, not on the roadworks
- Be alert for works traffic leaving or entering roadworks
- Keep a safe distance - there could be queues in front
- Observe all signs - they are there to help you

Remember that tiredness can kill. Take regular breaks from driving.

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